

COLONIAL AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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another passage he says, * We understood they were a people almost upon the very brink of renouncing" any dependence on the Crown,³ J The chief complaint of the King's government against the colonists was their persistent non-observance of the Navigation Act. They carried on a constant and a direct trade with foreign countries and exported thither commodities which the Act prohibited them from exporting. Massachusetts was the worst offender, and the Lords of Trade reported to the King that its government was conducted without the least regard to his authority or the least concern for his revenue* To the government of Charles 11 political reasons seemed to require the annulment of the Massachusetts charter and commercial reasons to supply a legal justification for it. Hence on June 13, 1683, the day after judgement was recorded against the charter of London, the Privy Council ordered the Attorney-General to bring a writ against the Massachusetts company. Fifteen months later, on October 23, 1684, the charter was annulled by a judgement in the Court of Chancery. The King was free to erect in its place whatever sort of government he thought fit, Macaulay mentions the forfeiture of the Massachusetts charter* to illustrate the character of Halifax* not as part of the King*\$ anti-democratic policy.

At one of the last councils which Charles held a remarkable scene took place. The charter of Massachusetts had been forfeited. A question arose how, for the future, the colony should be governed. The general opinion of the board was that the whole power, legislative as well as executive, should abide in the crown. Halifax took the opposite side* and argued with great energy against absolute monarchy, and in favour of representative government, it was vain, he said, to think that a population, sprung from the English stock* and animated by English feelings,

¹ Diary, May 26, June 6, 1671.